

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. John Egbert on 11 January 2010.

The application has been amended as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

IN CLAIM 13, LINE 3, after "the connecting apparatus comprising:" insert --a translatable portion--.

IN CLAIM 13, LINE 7, after "an opening through which", delete "a", and insert --said--.

IN CLAIM 13, LINE 17, after "said key slot" and before "receiving said translatable pin", insert --suitable for--.

CANCEL CLAIM 17.

IN CLAIM 18, LINE 1, after "The connecting apparatus of Claim", delete "17" and insert --15--.

IN CLAIM 21, LINE 1, after "of Claim 13," delete "whereinsaid" and insert --wherein said--.

Drawings

The following changes to the drawings have been approved by the examiner and agreed upon by applicant: figures 1, 2, 3a and 3b include portions with solid black shading. Solid black

shading is not permitted in drawings. See 37 CFR 1.84(m). Therefore, the "connector ports 5 and 10" and the "conical-shaped guide pins 11" must be altered to not include solid black shading. In order to avoid abandonment of the application, applicant must make these above agreed upon drawing changes.

Reasons For Allowance

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: none of the prior art of record alone or in combination teaches or renders obvious a connecting apparatus including two parts, the first part including a key slot radially opening from a first opening in the first part, the key slot having a diameter that is less than the diameter of the outer flanged member of the second member and larger than the diameter of a translatable pin of the second part, where the key slot is for receiving the translatable pin in combination with the other elements and structure set forth in claim. The Examiner notes, thought the Examiner's Amendment above claim 13 now positively recites the "translatable pin" as structural element of the claimed invention.

While the closest prior art of record to Hatakeyama teaches the device as substantially claimed, it fails to teach or suggest a key slot radially opening from the first opening in the first part. Furthermore, the inclusion of such a feature would not have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art in view of Hatakeyama because the respective first and second portions of Hatakeyama are disclosed as being "relatively rotatably and detachably" connected (column 2, lines 64-67). The addition of an asymmetric feature such as a key slot like that claimed would prohibit the relative rotation between the parts.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue

fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael R. Ballinger whose telephone number is (571)270-5567. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Friday 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Cris L. Rodriguez can be reached on (571)272-4964. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Michael R Ballinger/
Examiner, Art Unit 3732

/Cris L. Rodriguez/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3732